

Wednesday, November 4, 2009

AREA

Two honored by workforce program

For The Telegraph

Two area men have received individual achievement awards from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Bureau of Workforce Development.

The honor recognizes the accomplishments of individuals from Illinois who have overcome significant obstacles in achieving their personal career goals.

The honorees are Jason Forsting of White Hall and Dusty King of Highland.

Both received the awards at this year's annual Illinois Workforce Development Awards Banquet and Ceremony in Springfield on Thursday, October 22.

Forsting entered the Green County Job Center in February 2007. During his initial interview, he expressed a desire to attend the Heavy Equipment Technology Program at Rend Lake College, three to four hours away in southern Illinois. In order to acquire this training, he had to move his wife and two small children to Ina, Ill.

Since he was only 20 and with no means of supporting his family, moving that far from his hometown would be difficult. The career specialist in Green County didn't think this was a good plan, so she gave Jason several assignments to complete. He followed all the rules, did all the assignments, and he qualified for the WIA Adult Program.

Forsting completed the intake process in May; he applied to the school in June; and he was accepted to the training program and started classes in August. He and his family found an apartment, moved and he landed a part-time job in Ina just as his training was to begin.

In May, he graduated from the program, moved his family back to his home area and he landed a good-paying job at Freeson Inc. in Bluffs, Ill.

"I am grateful for the constant support of my family and the assistance I received from the WIA Program as I completed my training," Forsting said.

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King and his wife, Michelle, came to the WIA office in June 2008 out of financial desperation. King, a plumber by trade, had been laid off nine months before and had completely exhausted his unemployment benefits. His wife also lost her job as a mortgage lender.

King learned about a training option for truck driving after coming to the Madison County Employment and Training Department.

After taking a test, King found out he was deficient in reading and math and would not be eligible for truck driver training until he could score a higher grade. After attending a math workshop at the Southwestern Illinois workNet center in Granite City, and retaking the same test two times, he received a passing score. Two weeks later,

he began the truck driving program at Rend Lake Community College and successfully completed the training. Immediately after receiving his CDL license, he started working for a transport trucking company.

Within a month, King had concerns about the company's truck maintenance practices, which eventually led to his resignation and a renewed job search. After four months of job searching, Bechtel Construction Co., a sub-contractor for ConocoPhillips, offered him a position driving construction workers through the refinery to their work stations. He is working 50 hours per week for Bechtel and is earning \$28.50 per hour.

"I love my job, I love going to work every morning," he said.